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The Bronze of Pekapharṇa

Oskar von HINÜBER

After the study on the Palola Śāhi dynasty and their inscribed bronzes was published in 2004, more images with inscriptions became known, which were published in a series of articles in this journal.¹ Now it is my most pleasant obligation to thank Donald M. Stadtner, who brought yet another inscribed image to my attention, which is published here with the kind permission of the present owner. The preaching Buddha in *bhadrāsana* (fig. 1) can be added to those images discussed by N. Revire in his thesis on “The Enthroned Buddha in Majesty: An Iconological Study.”²

The inscription in Proto-Śāradā script is written in six segments mostly along the front of the base of the pedestal. The end of the text is determined by an empty space following the case ending °-ena at the right side of the base below the female donor to the left side of the Buddha (fig. 2a-f).

deyadharma(o)
ya(m) śakya
bhikṣu pekapharṇana
sardha(m) (s)u
maṇasiri
ena

¹. O. v. Hinüber: *Die Palola Śāhis. Ihre Steininschriften, Inschriften auf Bronzen, Handschriftenkolophone und Schutzzauber*. Antiquities of Northern Pakistan 5. Mainz 2004 [rev.: R. Salomon, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 17. 2003(!), pp. 185–188; H. Falk, *OLZ* 100. 2005, columns 696–698; G. Fussman, *JAs* 293. 2005, pp. 734–742; A. Nayyar, *Journal of Asian Studies* 65. 2006, pp. 453 foll.; R. Schmitt, *ZDMG* 157. 2007, pp. 500–502; A. M. Cacopardo, *EW* 58. 2008, pp. 475–477] supplemented by: “Three New Bronzes from Gilgit.” *ARIRIAB* X. 2007, pp. 39–43; — “More on Gilgit Bronzes and Some Additions to ‘Die Palola Śāhis’.” *ARIRIAB* XII. 2009, pp. 3–6; — “An Inscribed Incense Burner from the MacLean Collection in Chicago.” *ARIRIAB* XIII. 2010, pp. 3–8; — “Four Donations Made by Maṇgalahāṃsikā, Queen of Palola (Gilgit).” *ARIRIAB* XIV. 2011, pp. 3–6; — “A Brief Note on the Tholaka Inscription.” *ARIRIAB* XV. 2012, pp. 11 foll. — Moreover, another member of the ruling family of Palola is perhaps śrī mangalavikramādityanandi, cf. O.v.Hinüber: “More on Gilgit Bronzes.” *ARIRIAB* XII. 2009, p. 5. The inscription is published in the meantime as Thalpan 524:5 in D. Bandini: *Die Felsbildstation Thalpan VI. (Steine 451–811)*. Appendix: *Katalog der Inschriften von Basha, Bazeri Das, Chilās IV, V, VI, Harban, Hodur-Süd, Khanbari und Minargah*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans Band 9. Mainz 2009, p. 153. Due to an unfortunate editorial error, an outdated text is printed as commentary to Thalpan 524:5, which should be corrected following *ARIRIAB* XII. 2009, p. 5; for other supposed members of the family cf. *Palola Śāhis*, as above.

². Submitted to Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3 in December 2016, 2 Volumes: chapter 2.5 Buddhist sculptures from the Himalayas, First-Millennium Images from Kashmir (600–1000 CE), p. 276–285. It is my pleasant obligation to thank N. Revire for granting me access to an electronic version of his thesis. As N. Revire points out the Gilgit “bronzes” are rather brass images (p. 277).

With the only exception of one slightly doubtful character the reading does not pose any serious problem, though the inscription as a whole is not always written very carefully, e.g., the top of the character *rm(o)*. The *siddham*-sign (rendered here by #) is indicated by a nearly closed circle at the very beginning.³ It is impossible to decide whether or not there are faint traces of an *anusvāra* above *ya(m)*. The long -ā- in *sākyabhikṣu* is not written. In the unfinished ligature *rṇa* the horizontal line at the bottom connecting both halves of *ṇa* is missing as is the superscript -e- in the case ending. In *sārdham* neither the long -ā- nor the *anusvāra* are indicated unless a hardly visible dot at the right side of *rdha* is meant to express nasalization. The first character of *sumanaśirienā* is not totally beyond doubt, though a reading *su* makes sense, and the sometimes similar characters *pa*, *ya*, *ma*, which all occur in the text, are of quite a different shape. A small dot on top of the case ending °-ena seems to favor the assumption that the assumed *anusvāras* in *ya(m)* and *sardha(m)* are accidental rather.

There is no date. However, the form of the character *ya* indicates a date at the end of the seventh century or later, because the Proto-Śārada script hardly changes over a fairly long period since it slowly began to supersede the earlier “Gilgit Brāhmī” during the seventh century.⁴

In spite of some carelessness in writing and in the use of grammar, which is not unusual in inscriptions of this type, a corrected text can easily be established and understood:

deyadharmo yaṁ sākyabhikṣu-pekapharṇena sārdham sumanaśirienā

“This is the pious gift by the Śākyabhikṣu Pekapharṇa together with Sumanaśrī.”

The designation *sākyabhikṣu* occurs sometimes in northwestern inscriptions accompanied by the following names:⁵ Acintamittra, Puṇyajaya, Pekapharṇa, Bhadradharma, Ratnacittin, Ratnaprabha, Vidyāśrī (?), Vima(lī)bhānu (?), Vīkavarman (?), and Hariṣayaśa.⁶

³. On auspicious symbols at the beginning of manuscripts and inscriptions: G. Bhattacharya, “*Siddham, svasti* and *om* — invocations in epigraphs and manuscripts,” in: XX. *Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 2. bis 8. Oktober 1977 in Erlangen*. Vorträge hg. von W. Voigt. ZDMG Supplement IV. Wiesbaden 1980, p. 474 foll.; G. Roth, “Mangala-Symbols in Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts and Inscriptions,” pp. 239–249 (and plates) and L. Sander, “Om or Siddham - Remarks on Openings of Buddhist Manuscripts and Inscriptions from Gilgit to Central Asia,” pp. 251–261 (and plates), both in: *Deyadharma. Studies in Memory of Dr. D. C. Sircar*. Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 33. Delhi 1986. The corresponding Jain evidence is discussed by G. Bhattacharya, “The *bhale* symbol of the Jainas,” *BIS* 8. 1995, pp. 201–228.

⁴. O. v. Hinüber: *Palola Śāhis*, as note 1, p. 30, 179 and “The Gilgit Manuscripts: An Ancient Buddhist Library in Modern Research,” in: Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (eds.): *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford June 15 – 19 2009*. ÖAW. Philos.-hist. Kl. Denkschriften, 460. Vienna 2014, pp. 79–135, particularly p. 88.

⁵. The names are enumerated in O. v. Hinüber, “An Inscribed Bodhisatva from the Hemis Monastery,” *ARIRIAB* XVIII. 2015, pp. 3–9, particularly p. 8; on concept “*sākyabhikṣu*” cf. R. Cohen, “Kinsmen of the Sun: Śākyabhikṣu and the Institution of the Bodhisatva Ideal,” *History of Religions* 40.1. 2000, pp. 1–31, and G. Schopen in *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. More collected Papers*. Honolulu 2005, p. 244–246 answering to L. S. Cousins, “*Sākiyabhikkhu/Sakyabhikkhu/Śākyabhiksū*: A Mistaken Link to the Mahāyāna?”, *Sambhāṣā. Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 23. 2003, pp. 1–27, cf. also *Palola Śāhis*, as note 1 above, p. 168, note 225.

⁶. For the name Bhadradharma see U. von Schroeder: *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*. Volume One: India and Nepal. Hong Kong 2001, p. 114, no. 22A–B; for Vidyāśrī: *ibidem* p. 34, no. 3B. — There is even a rare *śākyabhikṣuṇī* named Surendranāthā mentioned in the inscription of a bronze from Nepal (9/10th century),

The name Peka-pharṇa in the present inscription is clearly Sogdian. The first member of the name is well known, although the derivation of the word *pyk* or *pykk* remains unclear.⁷ Two visitors to Shatial⁸ are named Pēkak, unless both inscriptions refer to the same person: 34:61 (= 34:64?) *pykk* “Pēkakk” and 37:2 *pykk’ | ZK ’n’xtβntk | BRY* “Pēkakk, son of Anākhit-vandak.”⁹ Moreover, the son of this (or one of these) Pēkakk(s) is perhaps mentioned twice at Shatial: 31:102 *’n’xtβntk | ZK pykk* and 34:45 *’n’xtβntk | ZK pykk | BRY* “Anākhit-vandak, son of Pēkakk.” As assumed by N. Sims-Williams, it is not unlikely that father and son travelled together, who both wrote their names on stone 34. Consequently, it seems that Pēkakk followed the custom to name his son after the grandfather.¹⁰ Still another Pekaka is mentioned in a Brāhmī inscription at Shatial: 5:2-5 [saṁvatsa]re 50 rum(e)ṣa pekako khāśa-rājyam gata “In the year 50 Rum-eṣa Pekaka went to the Khāśa Kingdom.” Reading and meaning of Rum-eṣa are uncertain. This is a rare case in which a Sogdian name is transcribed into Brāhmī, which guarantees the pronunciation. Equally rare is the date. If the Laukika era is assumed the year 50 might correspond to either AD 374/5, or 474/5 following the script used. Both dates would fall within the time frame of the contemporaneous Sogdian inscriptions.

Therefore it is certain that the *sākyabhikṣu* Pekapharṇa lived at the very least about two centuries later. This seems to be the first time that a *bhikṣu* mentioned in a Brāhmī inscription of this area bears an Iranian name.

The second part of the name is Sogdian *prn* < Iranian **farnah-* > Avestan *x̌arənah-* etc. “glory, splendor.”¹¹ Comparable names are attested along the Upper Indus and in colophons of the Gilgit Manuscripts.¹²

In spite of the masculine ending *-ena*, Sumanaśiri (Sumanaśrī) is the lady,¹³ who as a donor kneels at the left side of the Buddha, while Pekapharṇa as a monk of course sits on his right as usual.¹⁴

v. Schroeder, p. 456, no. 139C.

⁷. P. B. Lurje: *Personal Names in Sogdian Texts*. Iranisches Personennamenbuch. Band II Mitteliranische Personennamen, Faszikel 8, Vienna 2010, no. 977 *pykk*, *pyk*, *,pykk’/Pēk?/*.

⁸. The inscriptions are published in D. König, G. Fussman: *Die Felsbildstation Shatial*. Materialien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans Band 2. Mainz 1997 [rev.: M. Carter, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 9. 1995(!), pp. 276–279; H. Falk, *OLZ* 94. 1999, columns 239–246; R. Schmitt, *Kratylos* 44. 1999, pp. 189–192 (rev. of MANP 1 & 2); E. Olijdam, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 57. 2000, pp. 716–720; R. Salomon, *JAOS* 121. 2001, pp. 663 foll.].

⁹. Probably the same person is mentioned again at Shatial 39:35 *pykk’ | ZK (’n)[*.

¹⁰. Cf. N. Sims-Williams in *Die Felsbildstation Shatial*, as note 8, p. 65 (on names), p. 68 (on dates); for an English version cf. N. Sims-Williams, “The Iranian Inscriptions of Shatial,” *IT* 23-24. 1997–98, pp. 523–541, particularly pp. 530, 534. The custom to name a child after his grandfather which is prevalent in India and elsewhere is described, e.g., by A. Hilka: *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der altindischen Namengebung. Die altindischen Personennamen*. Breslau 1910, p. 8 foll.

¹¹. Cf. P. B. Lurje, as note 7 above, no. 896 *prn /Farn/*.

¹². Samples of these names are collected and discussed in O. v. Hinüber, “Names and Titles in the Colophon of the ‘Larger Prajñāpāramitā’ from Gilgit,” *ARIRIAB* XX. 2017, pp. 129–138, particularly p. 137.

¹³. On the use of the masculine ending *-ena* with feminine names in formulas cf. Names and Titles, as previous note, p. 133.

¹⁴. The position of donors is discussed in O. v. Hinüber: Palola Śāhis, as note 1 above, pp. 93, 170 (note 229), 174.

Fig. 1. Pekapharṇa inscription.



PLATE 2

Fig. 2a.



Fig. 2b.



Fig. 2c.

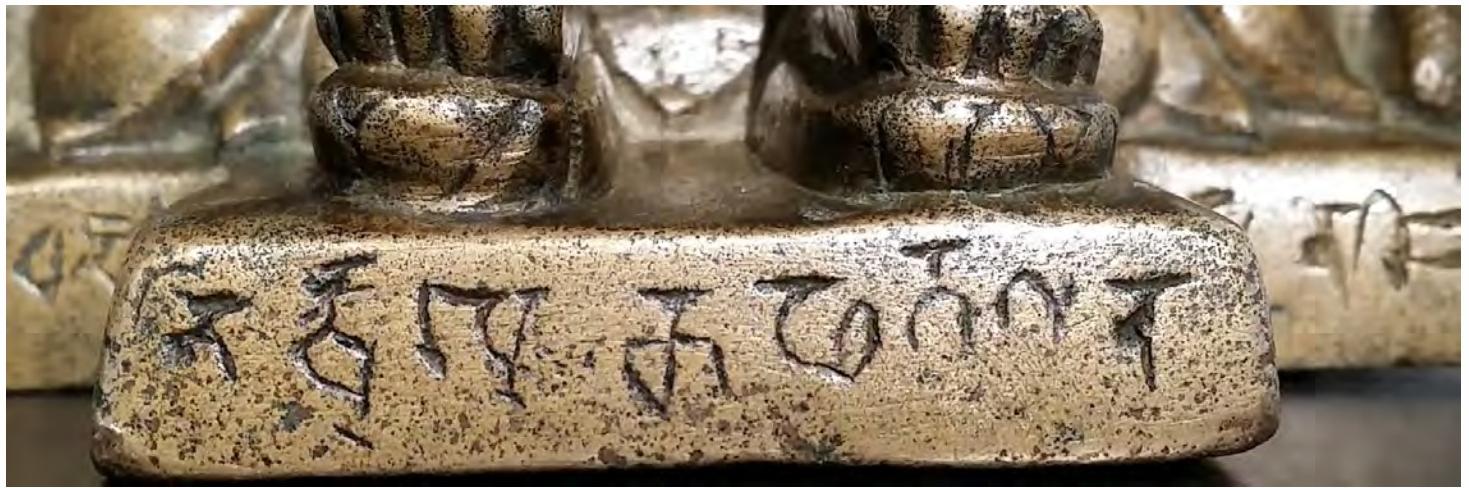


Fig. 2d.



Fig. 2e.



Fig. 2f.

